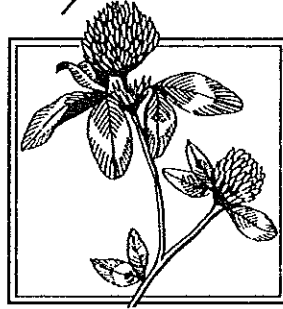


Litchfield Woods



HEALTH CARE CENTER

February 5, 2015

Written testimony of Denise Quarles, Administrator, Litchfield Woods Health Care Center, Concerning

***Proposed H.B. No. 5586 AN ACT INCREASING NURSING FACILITY RATES.**
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/TOB/H/2015HB-05586-R00-HB.htm>

***Proposed H.B. No. 5812 AN ACT CONCERNING A COST OF LIVING INCREASE FOR NURSING FACILITIES.** **<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/TOB/H/2015HB-05812-R00-HB.htm>**

***Proposed S.B. No. 231 AN ACT CONCERNING COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES FOR NURSING HOMES.** **<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/TOB/S/2015SB-00231-R00-SB.htm>**

Good evening Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and to the members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Denise Quarles and I am the Administrator at Litchfield Woods Health Care Center in Torrington, Connecticut. Litchfield Woods Health Care Center is a longstanding provider of skilled nursing care and rehabilitation with 160 beds and 285 employees. The facility has recently been recognized by the American Health Care Association for safety reducing hospital readmissions.

First I want to publicly thank the state legislators who introduced these badly needed bills---House Republican Leader Klarides, and Representatives Perillo and Gentile, and State Senator Crisco. And thank you also to the Human Services Committee for including these bills at this public hearing.

The bills all get to the same issue. Medicaid Nursing facility rates have been basically flat since 2007, but costs have been dramatically rising. These bills all recognize that a cost of living adjustment is essential to delivering quality care when each year we are faced with higher costs and new requirements.

The message from the operator's point of view is simple----Our nursing facilities needs your help. We just can't continue on a path where no help is provided without strapping our employees and jeopardizing quality.

Here are some examples of what we are up against in our nursing facility while the rates have been stagnant:

- Expenses have significantly increased for electricity, food, Natural gas, FUTA credit reduction, Affordable Care Act, Encryption software, and Background checks. These costs are uncontrollable and have a major impact on nursing home operations.
- As there is an increase in available services to Elders in the community, programs like Money Follows the Person and Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, have impacted the type of residents admitted to our facility. We applaud these community programs that offer long-term care options that maximize autonomy, dignity, and choice. However, skilled nursing homes are then admitting patients with a higher acuity, costing more for the nursing home whom is committed to providing quality care and services.
- Residents are living longer and requiring more care. The average age of a resident at Litchfield Woods Health Care Center is 87. We have 9 residents over 100 years of age.
- Finding qualified, compassionate staff can be challenging as well as expensive. Is it important to screen all employees to ensure the very best are hired to care for our vulnerable elderly population.
- There are many expenses that the nursing home pays – dental costs, some chemotherapy and other excluded medications, Physical, Occupational, and Speech therapy services. As these items are crucial to our resident's health and well-being, they are not denied these services if they are not covered by Medicaid.

I am asking you to advance these bills and provide our nursing facilities the help they need to care for our residents.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Denise Adams